TWO

SERMONS

ON

INTEMPERANCE,

DELIVERED

ON THE DAY OF THE ANNUAL FAST,

APRIL 8, 1813.

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FIRST SERMON.

PROV. XX, 1.

Wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

ON days, designated by civil authority for public humiliation and prayer, or thanksgiving and praise, it seems peculiarly proper, that the subject of discourse should be closely connected with civil institutions and national happiness. The righteousness, which exalteth a nation; the sin, which is a reproach to any people; the various classes of civil duties; national blessings and national judgments, are all subjects of this description—subjects often suggested in the scriptures—subjects highly important to Christians—subjects therefore, to which every Christian minister should devote a portion of his time and attention; and which at proper seasons he should endeavor clearly to illustrate and forcibly apply. Indeed so large a proportion of the duties of a Christian arises from civil compact, and depends on his relative situation in society; and so many of the judgments and mercies, which interest his feelings and influence his prayers and praises, are equally interesting to every member of the community; that a faithful minister, who means to declare the whole counsel of God without disguise, who resolves to keep nothing back through fear of man, who endeavors rightly to divide the word of truth and give to every one a portion in due season, must of course frequently introduce into his public discourses subjects, connected with national happiness and the civil institutions of his country.—On occasions, like the present, however, they seem, as was before observed, peculiarly appropriate. Nor have I, my friends, chosen my text this morning, without regard to this consideration.

"Wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."—These words of inspiration do indeed suggest a subject of great national importance. For they bring into view a vice, which not only renders individuals wretched; but involves the distress of families; and, in this country at least, threatens destruction to every social and civil institution.

It is not my intention, however, to consider the subject of intemperance in a limited point of view. Nor shall I, in discoursing upon it to-day, regard precisely the natural divisions of the text; but shall make such particular remarks on the subject, as seem appropriate to the occasion and adapted to practical improvement, under the following general heads;

I. The effects of intemperance;

II. The remedies and preventives of this evil.

By *intemperance* I mean an excessive, improper, or unnecessary use of strong drink or intoxicating liquor of every kind—in every form—to every degree of excess. In this discourse therefore the term will be employed to denote all, who thus use it—from the sober tippler (if the phrase be admissible) to the confirmed drunkard—from the man, who occasionally transgresses the rules of strict temperance, to the sot, who makes drinking his principal business; "who rises up early in the morning, that he may follow strong drink; who continues until night, till wine inflame him."

With this definition in view, let us, under the first general head of discourse, attend to the natural and general effects of intemperance,

1. On individuals,
2. On families, and
3. On the community or civil society.

Among the natural and most common effects of intemperance on individuals—on the intemperate themselves, is *poverty*. "The drunkard and the glutton," says Solomon, "shall come to poverty." There are, it is true, exceptions to this as well, as almost all general rules. There are some cases even of excessive intemperance, where this effect is not produced. A large

patrimony or some peculiar circumstances of situation have preserved a few confirmed drunkards from extreme poverty through life; especially when life itself, as is generally the case, has been cut short by their intemperance. Often, however, we see poverty in the train of evils, which follow this vice. Frequently do we behold the drunkard stripped of his property, covered with rags, lodged in jail, or begging his bread from house to house. Intemperance does indeed naturally, and almost unavoidably produce this effect, when it becomes a confirmed habit—a continued course of surfeiting and drunkenness; for then it leads to idleness and neglect of business, exposes to deception and fraud, in various ways produces a rapid waste of property, and generally soon ends in extreme penury. How many examples in almost every place might be adduced to confirm these observations! How often, my hearers, have we seen them illustrated! How many, whose prospects of competency were bright, have suddenly obscured them by sliding into this vicious course! How many, who were surrounded with the means of comfort and usefulness, have in a few years, by intemperance and its associate vices, not only wasted their own estates, but carelessly and wickedly involved others with them in poverty and distress! How many indeed have suffered, and are now suffering, from this effect of intemperance, even where the habit seemed not to be confirmed, nor the practice very excessive!

But poverty is not the only, nor the greatest, evil, which the intemperate man suffers in his own person. Nay; great as this evil often is, it may still be considered, as the least in the train. The next, which we shall name, is *bodily disease*—disease in its various forms. Scarcely a chronic disorder can be mentioned, which has not sometimes been produced, and often increased and confirmed by intemperance. Nor are these diseases the effects of *excessive* rioting and drunkenness only. For although extreme and continued intoxication most rapidly destroys the constitution, and sometimes produces sudden death; yet much lower degrees of intemperance often become the legitimate cause of debility

and pain. Nor is the agency of spirituous liquors, particularly of ardent spirits, less apparent in producing and aggravating the more rapid and acute diseases; especially violent and malignant fevers. Frequently this agency is obvious to the most superficial observer. Who has not known instances of fatal fevers, which evidently originated in a fit of intoxication? But we need not appeal to general and superficial observation; for we have the testimony of eminent physicians on this subject. "Ardent spirits," says Dr. Rush, "dispose the body to acute diseases in every form; and excite fevers in persons, predisposed to them from other causes. Thus," continues he, "when yellow fevers have visited the cities of the United States, hard drinkers have seldom escaped and rarely recovered." Other physicians have made similar observations concerning other prevailing fevers, which occasionally visit particular regions, through the country. Those, who have lived in habits of intemperance, though not the *exclusive* are generally the *first* and surest, victims of the destroying angel. Thus among the personal, evil effects of intemperance may be reckoned diseases of various kinds, attended with pain and debility, and finally producing premature death.

Hence we may add *premature death*, or, as one justly denominates it, *suicide*, to the catalogue of evils, arising from intemperance. The intemperate man is indeed a self-murderer. For he is daily swallowing a poison, which, though gradual in its operations, rarely fails of proving fatal in the issue. How often have we seen its fatal effects! How often have we seen the sentence, originally pronounced on *bloody men*, executed also on the *intemperate!* How often has it been made evident, that *they do not live out half their days!* Notwithstanding a few solitary instances of intemperate longevity, the truth is established beyond controversy, that intemperance in every degree, especially if excessive, has a tendency to produce, and very often does produce, premature death.

Let it not be imagined, however, that the unhappy effects of intemperance, upon the individual subject of

it, are confined to his body and estate. This great enemy of human happiness is never satisfied with the destruction of property and health. It attacks the nobler part of man, his mind, his intellectual powers. These it sometimes destroys at once, producing incurable insanity; sometimes it deranges them for a season only, producing temporary madness; but generally its operations here, as on the body, are slow, gradually impairing the memory, debilitating the understanding, and producing a permanent stupidity.

But before intemperance has produced these effects on the intellectual faculties, and even where it never produces them in the highest degree, it has an influence—an immediate influence on the temper and general deportment. We may add therefore, that the *moral effects* of intemperance are always pernicious. Not merely because this, like every other habitual, allowed sin proves a man to be irreligious, destitute of holiness, without God in the world, unfit for the kingdom of heaven—not merely because this, like every other vice, proceeds from that corrupt nature, which is the fruitful source of all wickedness; the fountain, from which every polluted stream flows—not merely because there is a kind of natural sympathy and established fellowship between all the vices, or (as the celebrated Roman orator said of the sciences) a certain chain, by which they are all united—not merely on account of these common properties of vice, do we say, that the moral effects of intemperance are always pernicious. But we thus designate this, as a leading vice, because it is directly and invariably followed by others—because it produces peculiar excitements and exposes to peculiar temptations, while it disarms the conscience and destroys the power of resistance. Falsehood, profanity, lewdness, fraud, theft, assaults, duelling, and even murder have often proceeded directly from intemperance; and in almost every instance of this habit, it is found closely connected with some of these vices. What, however, is still more alarming, as we shall have occasion to observe more particularly in the sequel of the discourse, is, that this practice, by

stupifying the intellectual faculties and searing the conscience, leaves but little hope of repentance and reformation. On the contrary experience proves, that those, who have once formed a habit of intemperance, generally remain, like the Ethiopean's skin and the leopard's spots, unchanged; and finally die, as they have lived, impenitent and stupid, carrying down to the grave this and all their sins upon their guilty heads!

For proof and illustration of these remarks I may appeal to general observation. I may direct your attention to known facts. Recollect, my hearers, the instances of intemperance, which have fallen within the circle of your acquaintance; and consider, what were the consequences to the unhappy victims of it. Look around you at the present moment, and behold the evil effects, which it is producing on the health, on the estate, on the happiness of your neighbors and friends. See that decaying house, that neglected shop, that uncultivated farm! Do you ask, what is the cause of these appearances—of these signs of approaching poverty? We answer in one word, *intemperance*. The owners have lately, very lately, fallen into the destructive habit of hard drinking; and already idleness and inattention, prodigality and waste are bringing upon them swift destruction. Look again; and you will see a convenient house with a fruitful farm—a situation affording to honest industry all the comforts of life. This but a few years ago was possessed by a man, who still might have lived and possessed it, happy in the bosom of a happy family. But alas, he became intemperate, neglected his business, made foolish contracts, wasted his estate, destroyed his health, and finally, after having become a burden to himself, a grief to his friends and a nuisance to society, died in disgrace and wretchedness, unpitied and unlamented!—For further proof and more particular illustration I might direct you to hospitals and sick-chambers, where you would see diseases of various kinds, brought on by intemperance—to prisons, where you would find criminals of every description, tracing all their crimes to this parent vice—to every abode of wretchedness and woe, where you would not fail to dis-

cover, some of the fruits of this prevailing sin—even to the silent mansions of the dead, where you would behold monuments (if monuments contained the inscriptions of truth) of thousands, who became martyrs, and fell victims, to this great destroyer of the human race. But further proof and more particular illustration of these remarks are not necessary. Neither would it be possible in a single discourse to name separately, and describe minutely, all the various, personal evils, which take their rise, or receive their principal support, from intemperance. For what casualty, what disease, what distress, what disgrace, what deformity, what crime, what wretchedness, among all the various forms of human misery and guilt, has not proceeded from this fruitful source of evil? "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They, that tarry long at the wine; they, that go to seek mixed wine." But,

2. Let it not be forgotten, that the family and friends of an intemperate man are necessarily involved in many of the evil consequences of his vice. How many families (those nurseries of friendship and social affection, those circles of tenderness and love, those abodes of harmony and happiness) has intemperance converted into places of discord and contention, wrath and clamor, and every evil work! In this respect "one sinner destroyeth much good." If one of the heads of a family fall into a habit of intoxication or excessive drinking, the peace, order, and happiness of the whole domestic circle are immediately interrupted if not forever destroyed. How many children have been trained up in ignorance, especially of every thing good; because their parents, through intemperance, have become unfit to teach them, and unable or disinclined to procure them teachers! If however the sobriety and peculiar exertions of one parent so far counteract the evil effects of intemperance in the other, as to preserve their children from hunger and nakedness, and, through the happy institution of public schools, obtain for them a useful education; still must they grow up, and come

forward into active and social life, under many disadvantages. Their sufferings too, from shame and supposed disgrace, are not unfrequently severe. But how often does the unhappy influence of one parent over the other at length deprive their children of all parental care! How often indeed does the united influence of example, poverty, disgrace, and dejection, lead the sober partner into the same destructive course, with the intemperate companion! And how often are the children of such parents led along step by step into the same path of ruin. "It is remarkable," says an accurate observer of human nature, "that drunkenness resembles certain hereditary, family, and contagious diseases. I have once known it," continues he, "to descend from a father to four out of five of his children;—and I have heard of its spreading through a whole family, composed of members not originally related to each other." Who of us, my hearers, has not observed similar instances of the contagious nature and contaminating influence of this vice? It is true, there are cases, in which this influence is nobly resisted; and the children of drunkards grow up in sobriety, acquire useful information, form habits of industry, become good members of society, and are as they should be, doubly respected for their peculiar and successful exertions. Ordinarily, however, this vice, which at first produces disgust and mortification in friends, ultimately creates a familiarity; and strange as it may seem, gradually allures, charms, and destroys.

To illustrate these remarks more fully, let me again direct your attention to the house of an intemperate man. Observe his family through the day. See their anxiety, during his absence, and their terror in his presence. Behold in them the mingled emotions of shame and indignation, grief and disgust, fear and compassion. Repeat this visit of observation from day to day; and view his family in every situation—when they rise in the morning, perhaps from sleepless couches, and pillows planted with thorns—when they meet at table, if indeed they ever thus meet—when they retire in silent grief at night, or anxiously wait his

lingering return from the tavern. Thus observe the situation of his family by day and night; and then say, whether the half has been told of the disorder, contention, discord, and wretchedness, which this destructive vice produces in the family circle?—But it is time, that we proceed,

3. To consider the evil effects of intemperance upon civil society, especially in this country. It seems to be an acknowledged fact, that intemperance is a great and increasing, public evil. Indeed young as this country is, it is very much to be doubted, whether the intemperate use of intoxicating liquor, especially of ardent spirit, has arrived to the same degree of excess in any other country. How many confirmed drunkards may be found in every town! In addition to these, how many, who approach so near to daily intoxication, as to deserve the name of common tipplers! Still further, how many, who occasionally drink to excess, or at least partake of spirituous liquor, when no benefit can be expected from it; who are therefore in a measure intemperate, and are fast approaching the state of drunkards! It is indeed alarming and distressing to the enlightened patriot, to observe the progress of this public evil—this (shall I call it) national vice in our country—to see it, invading all ranks in society, influencing all public transactions, introducing corruption into our elections, polluting the streams of public justice, undermining the foundations of civil liberty, and already causing the ark of our political safety to tremble. "Intemperance," says one, "which was scarcely known in our country a century ago, has within the last twenty or thirty years increased beyond all parallel or example; till, like a mighty flood, it has spread over the whole land, and threatens to sweep before it every thing valuable in our social and civil institutions."

Some idea of the extent of this public evil may be formed from a general estimate of the quantity and cost of ardent spirits, annually consumed in the United States. Such an estimate has recently been made by a committee, appointed by the general Association of Massachusetts for this and other similar purposes.

This committee in their report, after giving a detailed account of the quantity of ardent spirits, distilled, imported, &c. present the following general statement and calculation;—"We come," say they, "to the melancholy result, that the free citizens of this country, (for the slaves have this great advantage over the whites that they are not *allowed* the use of ardent spirits)—the free citizens of this country consume annually not less than 20,000,000 gallons of spirits;* which, (considering that a large portion is consumed in taverns at a great additional expense, and that a large portion is greatly diluted after it leaves the ship or distillery and before it is retailed,) can hardly cost the consumers less than 23,000,000, or 25,000,000 dollars; an enormous sum, which exceeds the expense of our national government in time of peace added to the expense of all the state governments, the support of schools, and of the clergy, and the interest of our national debt; a sum, in short, which exceeds all that is paid for the support of government, the education of children, and the support of religious instructors, by the people of this country."

This, my hearers, is certainly a *melancholy result.* Recollect, that this vast expense to the country is incurred by the consumption of *ardent* spirit alone. Consider too how little of this spirit is necessary or beneficial—how much of it is not only useless, but pernicious—how large a proportion of it is consumed by those, who drink to excess, producing in them intoxication and the various degrees of intemperance. Consider likewise, that the value of the time, spent in taverns and tippling shops, probably amounts to an equal sum with the cost of the liquor consumed. Consider moreover, that intemperance, by producing personal poverty and disease, burthens the public with vagabonds and invalid paupers; and thus as well as by producing annually many thousand premature deaths, diminishes the active and efficient population of the country. Add to

*A writer in a late Panoplist, who seems to have had access to the returns of all the Marshals in the United States for the year 1810; and whose estimate is therefore probably accurate, makes the quantity of ardent spirits, distilled and imported, during that year still larger. *See Pan. for March*, 1813.

these considerations a view of the unhappy influence, which this vice more than any other, has on our civil institutions, by leading to ignorance and deception—by preparing the way for a cheap and extensive system of bribery—by disqualifying thousands for the rational enjoyment of civil liberty and the judicious exercise of civil rights—by rendering numbers in the community the mere tools of selfish politicians and artful demagogues—by bringing to the polls at our most important elections men, actually deprived of reason and common sense, and thus (alarming consideration) leaving the fate of the country to be decided by the faltering voice or trembling hand of a drunkard. Bring these considerations together; and you must perceive, that intemperance in this country is an alarming public evil—a national sin, which is drawing down the judgments of heaven upon the land—a vice, which, from its nature, connexion, and extensive influence, assumes a peculiarly threatening aspect; and which, if not restrained, will probably soon become an engine of destruction to our civil institutions.

When therefore we take into one connected view the personal, domestic, and civil effects of intemperance; we cannot but feel interested in the inquiry, how this evil may be checked in its progress. If we have any regard for our own safety or the happiness of others—any principle of patriotism or humanity, we must be desirous to discover and apply, as far as possible, those remedies and preventives, which are suited to the nature of the case. To this part of the subject, however, I must invite your attention in the afternoon. In the mean time, that we may feel the importance of attending seriously to the subject, let us recollect the considerations, which have been suggested this morning, and to these let us add a general view of the everlasting consequences of intemperance to every dying drunkard. With a single word on this point, purposely reserved for this place, I shall close the morning discourse.

Think, my friends, on the awful situation of the intemperate man in view of eternity! An inspired apos-

tle has expressly named *drunkards* among those, who shall never enter the kingdom of heaven. If therefore any remain such, and die impenitent, they must unavoidably perish for ever! And how few, who have once become intemperate, *do* repent! How many die in a fit of intoxication! How many render themselves perfect idiots or madmen, or at least so far destroy their reason, as to become incapable of serious reflection—as to cut themselves off from the very possibility of repentance! Think then, I beseech you, on this awful state of the drunkard; and not only avoid it yourselves, but adopt and use all possible means to deliver and preserve others from it.—And may the blessing of Heaven crown all our exertions with success; and render them effectual in promoting the temporal good of individuals, families, and the community; and above all, the salvation of immortal souls. AMEN.

SECOND SERMON.

PROV. XX, 1.

Wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

WINE is a mocker. How many has it mocked! Of how many has it made laughingstocks! How many has it converted into fools, idiots, and madmen. *Strong drink is raging.* How often has it raged in our view! How far has its rage extended! What multitudes has its violence destroyed! How much poverty, disease, and wretchedness has it spread through the land!—Wine is a mocker; strong drink is raging; and *whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.* Yet how many have been thus deceived; and led blindfold in the path of ruin! How many are still thus deceived; and hurried on to swift destruction! In how many forms, and among what a variety of persons, do the evil effects of intemperance appear!

"Pythagoras, we are told, maintained, that the souls of men after death expiated the crimes, committed by them in this world, by animating certain brute animals; and that the souls of those animals, in their turn, entered into men, and carried with them all their peculiar qualities and propensities. This doctrine of a Grecian philosopher," as one aptly remarks, "was not probably designed to be understood literally; but was intended simply to convey a lively idea of the changes, produced in man by the intemperate use of spirituous liquor." Intemperance does indeed metamorphose men into beasts; and in its different stages displays the vilest qualities of the filthy and the ravenous. What scenes of lewdness and violence—what objects of disgust and terror does it present even to public view! "A more affecting spectacle" (I here use the language of Dr. Rush) "cannot be exhibited, than a person, into

whom this infernal spirit has entered. It is more or less affecting according to the station the person fills in a family, or in society, who is possessed by it. Is he a husband? How deep the anguish, which rends the bosom of his wife! Is she a wife? Who can measure the shame and aversion, which she excites in her husband! Is he the father, or is she the mother of a family of children? See their averted looks from their parent, and their blushing looks at each other! Is he a magistrate? or has he been chosen to fill a high and respectable station in the councils of his country? What humiliating fears of corruption in the administration of the laws, and of the subversion of public order and happiness, appear in the countenances of all, who see him! Does he stand in the place of a minister of the gospel? Here language fails me. If angels weep, it is at such a sight!"

Having in the morning, however, taken a particular view of the *effects* of intemperance on individuals, families, and civil societies; let us now proceed as was proposed,

II. To consider what are the most effectual remedies and preventives of this evil. This inquiry naturally divides itself into two parts;

1. What have men to do by way of remedy or prevention in their own case, and for their own personal safety?

2. What can the sober do, and what ought they to attempt, in this business, for the benefit of others, and the general good?

In the first part I have a word of exhortation for drunkards. We cannot indeed ordinarily expect to find many such in the house of God. Nor is there much encouragement to admonish, or much hope of reclaiming, even those, who are thus found within the reach of a warning voice. But whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, it is our duty to speak—it is our duty to say to every drunkard present, (if any such have left their cups for an hour, and wandered hither,) "friend do thyself no" more "harm." Break off your destructive habit at once. Dash from your lips the fatal poison. Separate yourself from those companions,

who would lead you on in your ruinous course. Forsake every place, and avoid every employment, which would expose you to temptation. Flee from Sodom. Remember Lot's wife, and look not back on the burning plains. Escape to the mountains for your life. Repent and be converted, or you will surely perish; for we are authorised and commanded to declare, that "no drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of heaven!"

It has sometimes been recommended to drunkards, *gradually* to discontinue the use of spirituous liquors. The recommendation is always given in vain; and the attempt to regard it has always proved unsuccessful. Among the few, who have been reclaimed from the habit of intemperance, it is believed, not a single instance can be adduced in support of this delusive plan of reformation. Indeed a partial or gradual reformation appears, from the very nature of this vice, to be utterly impracticable. For the first inebriating draught, instead of diminishing, will increase the unnatural appetite, and overcome the strongest resolution against the second. If therefore the drunkard has not entirely given himself up to disgrace and ruin—ruin temporal and eternal, let him strike at once at the root of the evil. Let him resolve to drink *no more* intoxicating liquor especially ardent spirit, while he lives. Let him declare war—an eternal war, against this enemy of his soul. Let him not deliberate an hour; for he, "that deliberates here, is lost." Let him not delay a moment; for delays here are fatal. Let him remember, that his only possible way of escape from destruction is in a sudden and complete abstinence from the deadly poison. Let his imagination therefore imprint on every vessel, which contains ardent spirit, this solemn caution—this strong prohibition, "TASTE NOT; HANDLE NOT; TOUCH NOT."

But let it not be forgotten, that the confirmed, habitual drunkard is not the only person, for whom our subject furnishes matter of personal application and reproof. There are various degrees of intemperance; all of which produce a portion of the evils, we have named—all of which, by natural increase and continual

progression tend to the same fatal end. It therefore becomes every person who makes any use of spiritous liquor, seriously to consider, whether he does not sometimes use it without any benefit—without the least prospect of advantage—without being able to give any satisfactory reason for his conduct.

It has been contended by some that *ardent* spirit is never useful, except as a medicine. This is indeed evidently true, with reference to most people, at most seasons, in most employments; and perhaps, if proper substitutes were carefully provided, it would be found ultimately best for all, entirely to abstain from the use of it. But however this question may be decided, there can be no doubt, that many who are never perfectly intoxicated, still injure their constitutions, waste their estates, distress their families, and finally become a burthen to society, by a too free and general use of spirituous liquor. Let every person therefore, who views himself as a sober drinker, carefully examine himself with reference to this practice. Let him consider, whether he does not indulge himself in drinking either such kinds of liquor, or at such seasons, or under such circumstances, or in such quantities, as cannot be justified—as, he is convinced, is neither necessary nor useful—as therefore, he must conclude, is pernicious, dangerous, and sinful.

To enforce this exhortation, let it be remembered, that every unnecessary draught of spirituous liquor naturally and directly leads to greater excess; and may, before we are aware of danger, end in a habit—an incurable habit of intemperance. Men never become drunkards at once. They are drawn gradually, and sometimes reluctantly along, from the confines of sobriety. The best natural propensities, by abuse, often become the instruments of this vice. It is frequently commenced and established by the perverted influence of sociability, politeness, hospitality, and natural generosity. How many have been gradually led into intemperance by foolishly regarding, what are sometimes accounted necessary forms of civility! How many have been imperceptibly drawn into the same de-

structive course, by carelessly associating with those persons, whose evil example naturally allured them; or by frequenting those places, which necessarily exposed them to temptation! It is dangerous for a person, however temperate, to become a companion of the intemperate; or to visit often taverns and tippling shops. In such places, with such companions, he is never safe. Thus situated, he probably will not be able long to resist the repeated solicitations to drink, what he does not need, nor desire. His social feelings will not allow him to refuse a pledge of friendship, and his liberal feelings will not permit him to partake at the expense of another. Hence the place and society furnish continual temptations; and he may frequently feel himself almost compelled to take an unnecessary, and at first perhaps an unpleasant, draught; till an unnatural appetite, thus gradually and imperceptibly formed, finally causes him to fall a prey to the insidious destroyer.

Let the young, especially, be warned of this danger, for to them, while their social propensities are strong, it is peculiarly great. Let them view every place of dissipation, as a snare, set for their destruction—as a gibbet, erected for their execution. Let them be careful therefore, how they approach those haunts of vice—those scenes of temptation—those regions of death.—Do you see a young man often repairing to a tavern or a tippling shop, set him down, as a future drunkard. Think not, that you wrong him by the imputation. Think not, that he may avoid the vice of intemperance, and thus refute the charge. No; you are perfectly safe in your conjecture. He will more than fulfil your alarming predictions. He is in the path of ruin; and nothing will reclaim him. He is blind to his danger; and nothing will open his eyes. Experience and observation will justify the declaration, that not one young man in ten of this description—not one in ten, who begin in youth to frequent places of dissipation, and associate with men of intemperance, will reach the age of forty, without becoming a vagabond or sot. Wherefore, my young friends, "be not among wine-bibbers"—Keep at a distance from those, "who are mighty to drink wine, and

men of strength to mingle strong drink"—go not into the abodes of "rioting and drunkenness"—step not upon the polluted ground of intemperance—"avoid it, pass not by it; turn from it, and pass away."—We come now, according to the proposed division of our general inquiry, to consider,

2. What the sober part of the community can do, and what they ought to attempt, in this business, for the benefit of others and the general good? how they may hope to check the progress of this national sin? or, in other words, what means they may use, with probability of success, to remedy the evil, where it exists, and prevent its ravages, where it threatens to approach? —To this consideration we are urged, my hearers, by the most powerful motives of duty and interest. The voice of humanity and patriotism presses it upon us. Regard to the glory of God, and the happiness of our fellow men, demands of us immediate attention to it. All our social relations; all our civil connexions; all our natural sympathies; and, if we are Christians, all our religious principles constrain us to regard it. As men, we cannot but feel compassion for those, who are already confirmed in the habit of intemperance; and anxiety for those, whose age and situation peculiarly expose them to temptation. As members of civil society, we must be distressed at the prospect of the calamities, which this vice, if suffered to prevail much further, will inevitably bring on the whole community. As Christians, we must be grieved, when we behold transgressors, especially drunkards, because they keep not the divine law, live in practical infidelity, daily "treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath," and generally die stupid and impenitent. Under these solemn impressions therefore let us inquire, what in our respective situations we can do, to check the progress and restrain the ravages of this prevailing evil; and let us resolve immediately to go and do it.

Those of us, who are *Christian professors* and members of a particular church, may in that relation be interested in the inquiry before us. By mutual covenant, we have promised to watch over one another in love;

and regard the discipline which Christ hath appointed for his church. Look around you then, my brethren; and see, whether there is no one of our number, who drinks intemperately, and thus walks disorderly. If such an instance fall within your notice, neglect not to warn, admonish, and reprove, with meekness and fidelity. Should you not be able thus to gain your backsliding brother, proceed from step to step, according to the directions of Christ and your covenant engagements; and leave not your brother to perish at the altar—leave him not, till he is reclaimed from his sinful course, or excluded from the church. I do not mean to recommend church discipline in cases of intemperance alone. It ought to be exercised in every case of unchristian deportment. It is, however, peculiarly important, that intemperance in a member of the church should always be made a matter of church discipline. For it is a public sin. It is generally known to all. No witnesses are necessary to prove its existence. The offender carries about with him the evidence of his offence—the marks of his guilt—the sentence of his condemnation. Say not in the language of cold-hearted selfishness, "let every one take care of himself;" for we are expressly commanded, to "provoke one another unto love and good works." Say not in the language of cruel insensibility, "am I my brother's keeper?" for we are bound by the ties of solemn covenant, to "watch over one another in love." Say not in the language of unbelieving indolence, we should "labor in vain, and spend our strength for nought;" for the discipline, which the Head of the church hath instituted, he will vindicate and bless. Wherefore, my brethren, be persuaded to guard the altar of our God—the table of our Lord, from the polluting touch of intemperance. By faithful, christian discipline, even an intemperate brother *may* be gained. At least others may be benefitted by the warning; tender consciences may be relieved, a reproach removed from the Christian name, and one check given to this prevailing sin.

Again; *parents, guardians, and all, who are placed at the head of families* are interested in this inquiry; for

they may often do much to prevent intemperance in the rising generation. How many, through neglect of parents and guardians, commence, very early in life, that course of dissipation, which finally ends in drunkenness! How many being permitted, in youth, and even in childhood, to spend their evenings, if not their nights, without parental restraint or guardian care, are early drawn into the current of intemperance and vice, and soon overwhelmed in the abyss of misery and guilt!—Be persuaded therefore, ye, who are heads of families,—ye, who have children, apprentices, or hired servants under your care—be persuaded to set your houses in order; and use your authority to keep the members, especially the younger members of your families under wholesome restraint. Prescribe to them the hours, the mode, and the place of recreation. Suffer them not to violate the rules of domestic order. Leave them not to the capriciousness of youth, to the allurements of the world, to the propensities of depraved nature. Above all, keep them from those companions, who would persuade, and those places, which would tempt them to intemperance, with all its associate vices.

Further; *innholders, and others, who vend spirituous liquors*, are interested in this inquiry; for, if they cannot do much *to prevent*, they may, by violating the laws, abusing their licenses, and perverting their employment from its original design—they may do much to *increase* the evil of intemperance. Let all such persons therefore be admonished of their responsibility for their conduct, and their danger of becoming partakers in other men's sins. Let them consider the design of their employment, and, by their rigid adherence to the path of duty, let them endeavor to render it a public blessing. Let them carefully examine, and duly regard the laws of this commonwealth, which furnish rules for the regulation of their houses and shops. It is true, that a strict observance of some branches of the law, regulating licensed houses, especially those, which relate to minors, town-residents, &c. is often difficult; but it is likewise important—highly important for the public good, and necessary for the peace of a good

conscience. It is too, sometimes, a delicate office to refuse strong drink to those who abuse it—who are already raging under its influence; but, delicate as it is, it may be performed by a man of resolution; and must be performed by a man of principle.

Once more; this inquiry is interesting to *magistrates, and other civil officers*, who are made guardians of the public safety, and charged with the execution of the laws. The statutes of this commonwealth, designed to prevent intemperance, are by no means deficient; nor would the execution of them be difficult to a man of firmness and perseverance. And who can estimate the public benefit and private happiness, which would result from fidelity in all, to whom this business belongs. I do verily believe, that a rigid execution of these laws through the state, (beside various other happy effects,) would preserve annually from untimely death, at least one person, and from poverty and distress, ten families, for each town in the commonwealth. Make a calculation on the subject, with reference to one particular mode of restraining the intemperate. Consider for a moment the benefit, which would probably arise from a faithful and impartial execution of that law, which requires the selectmen of a town, to post all common tipplers, and prohibit all licensed persons from furnishing them with spirituous liquor. What a check, in many places, would such a measure give to intemperance! In one town, where the experiment has been recently made, the happy result, as I have been informed, far exceeded the most sanguine expectations. Not only those who were posted; but others likewise, through fear of similar disgrace, were thus placed under salutary restraint. Selectmen, magistrates, civil officers, will you not be faithful to your trust? Will you suffer the wholesome laws of your country to lie dead in your hands; and personal happiness and civil liberty to perish with them? Will you not do, what the power of office authorizes, and the oath of office obliges you to do? Will you not interpose your authority to save the drunkard from himself, to preserve his family from

poverty and distress; to avert the ruin, which this increasing, desolating vice threatens to bring upon our beloved country?

Finally; my hearers, in whatever situation we are placed—in whatever sphere we move—in whatever capacity we are called to act, we are *all* more or less interested in this inquiry; for we may all, by precept or example, do something for the suppression or prevention of intemperance. But, instead of using our influence for this purpose, how often have we been carelessly instrumental of increasing the wicked practice! How many, by an affected, pernicious generosity, have encouraged and even urged their friends to drink, what they did not need, and thus imperceptibly excited in them an appetite for ardent spirit, to their ultimate disgrace and ruin! I never see an instance, nor think of the danger, of this practice—of this barbarous civility—this cruel kindness, without recollecting the solemn warning of the prophet;—"Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink; that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunken!"

How many hired men have been literally hired, or bribed, to become drunkards! The bribery is indeed indirect and secret; but it is nevertheless real and effectual. The following supposition will exhibit a specimen of the mode of its operation. A young man leaves his father's house temperate, in health, without any appetite for ardent spirit. He has perhaps seldom or never used it; and he does not now need it. He enters, however, into the service of a man who drinks freely himself; or, if he does not, who would be thought as liberal, as his neighbors. The young man is, of course, immediately exposed to the temptation of commencing tippler, by having ardent spirit, if not daily, yet frequently, presented to him; perhaps with the additional allurement of the example and persuasion of a fellow-laborer, who is already far advanced on the road to intemperance. At first he has no relish for it, perhaps even loathes it; but finding by experience, that it affords a temporary excitement of the animal spirits, and seems to recruit his exhausted strength (which proba-

bly might be more effectually done by a little food with simple drink)—learning too, that others in his situation do habitually take it—perceiving moreover, that it costs him nothing, he gradually slides into the practice of using it, soon thinks it necessary, and in the course of a few years becomes established in a habit of intemperance.

My friends, instead of thus leading our fellow-men into the paths of wretchedness and guilt, let us use all our influence and authority, to preserve them from ruin, temporal and eternal. Let us do, what we can, to reclaim those, who have already run into intemperance, and prevent others from following their destructive course. Something might be done, and something certainly ought to be done, to check this growing evil. Exertions for this purpose have indeed been made, and not without beneficial effects, by a few solitary individuals. But the magnitude and alarming progress of the evil require union and energy in all the friends of humanity. I am happy in being able to announce to you in this connexion, the existence of a society, lately organized, called "THE MASSACHUSETTS SOCIETY FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF INTEMPERANCE." It is a voluntary association; and it is hoped, that it will be increased by a few individuals from every town in the commonwealth.* It is moreover ardently wished, that it may become a parent society to similar associations in every town. Such societies, by the mutual agreement of the members to observe certain restrictions, relative to the use of spirituous liquors, in their social visits, and at places of public entertainment—by adopting a uniform system of conduct toward hired men—and, above all, by united exertion and combined influence in causing a rigid execution of the laws on the subject;—by these means, such societies might unquestionably

* By a vote of the society on the day of their organization, the 5th of Feb. "all persons, who wish to join this Society, are requested to leave their names with either of the secretaries" (Rev. Abiel Abbot of Beverly, and Rev. Joshua Huntington of Boston,) "and such persons will be considered as original members, when admitted at the next annual Meeting, which will be held on the Friday after the general election."

do much not only to check, but perhaps to cure, the evil of intemperance. Should these means be adopted prudently, and pursued with energy, future generations, if not the present, will derive incalculable advantage from them—thousands will be preserved from an untimely grave, and tens of thousands from poverty and distress.

In conclusion of this discourse, let me exhort all, to review the subject; to consider its high importance; and remember the awful responsibility, under which we are placed to regard it in our future conduct. The subject, my friends, "is not a vain thing unto you; it is your life." With it are connected the safety of your civil institutions—your political existence. It concerns your personal security; your social enjoyments; I may add, as to some at least, your eternal felicity. In it are involved your dearest interests—your highest hopes. Be persuaded therefore to devote to it a portion of your time, attention, and energy. By the desire of happiness, which is implanted in every breast —by the tender affections of parents and friends—by a regard to the welfare of the rising generation—by the principles of patriotism and the common feelings of humanity—by the tender sympathies of christian charity and a compassionate solicitude for the salvation of immortal souls—by the promises and threats of Heaven —by the fear of God and the love of man—by every consideration, which can interest you—by every motive, which can influence you, as christian professors, as members of civil society, or as men; let me beseech you, my hearers, to attend to this subject; and do your part in this business of general reformation. AMEN.